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DIRK KEMPTHORNE  
GOVERNOR

November 1, 2001

COPY

The Honorable Spencer Abraham  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy

Dear Secretary Abraham:

I am disappointed I won't be meeting with you. When DOE rescheduled your visit it apparently was not deemed important that I was committed to another function on this date.

I am glad your brief itinerary focuses on INEEL and Argonne's technical assets. Harnessing the Laboratories' expertise in nuclear energy, subsurface science and other fields will support the Administration's strategies for a reliable domestic energy supply, national security, and environmental protection.

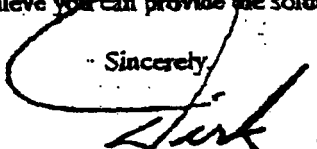
Unfortunately, in addition to the great technical resources of the National Laboratories, you have inherited a Department that has not honored many of its commitments through the years to Idaho and other states, and in some instances has not acted in good faith. Whether or not we have confidence in particular individuals, we cannot take the Department's word as its sole bond.

Our representatives recently agreed upon a streamlined technical approach for starting the beleaguered Pit 9 project. They have not, however, established the mechanisms needed to guarantee DOE's performance where our two prior agreements for Pit 9 have failed. The cleanup of the INEEL's larger buried waste area also remains unresolved.

DOE still confronts delays in shipments from INEEL to WIPP, and it has again postponed much needed decisions on the treatment of INEEL's high-level waste. DOE must meet its legal commitments to Idaho and resolve environmental problems from historic activities at the INEEL. The Snake River Plain Aquifer, which underlies the INEEL, is the main source of drinking and agricultural water to southern Idaho. We must safeguard the Aquifer and the people, environment, and economy that depend on it.

I appreciate your personal interest in ensuring sound use of the Laboratories' resources, tackling historic environmental problems and restoring the Department's credibility with our citizens. I have faith in you Spence. I believe you can provide the solutions we seek.

Sincerely,

  
DIRK KEMPTHORNE  
Governor

*Thank you, Spence*